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October 3, 2000

For Immediate Release:

FIREWORKS TO ADD "SPARK" TO EIU HOMECOMING 2000 EVENTS

CHARLESTON – Attendees at Eastern Illinois University Homecoming 2000 events could spend a lot of their time this weekend looking upward.

In addition to a fireworks display intended to add extra "spark" to the year's activities, the game ball for the EIU/Tennessee State football game will arrive via the sky, courtesy of Eastern's ROTC Panther Battalion in celebration of the unit's 20th anniversary on the university campus.

Community residents are invited to join EIU students, faculty and staff during these and other special events scheduled to take place throughout the week. Of special note are the annual pep rally and parade, scheduled to take place Friday and Saturday, Oct. 6 and 7. Other new activities will include an EIU-Charleston 2.5K Homecoming Race, set to begin at 9 a.m. Saturday.

The race will begin at the intersection of Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue and cover the same route as the parade – north up Seventh to the Charleston Square, west on Monroe,

—more—

then back to Eastern's campus via Sixth Street. Runners (and walkers!) will compete for several awards and prizes.

An entry fee of \$10 (\$7, EIU students) is required, and pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. Pre-registration also will be available between 7:45 and 8:45 a.m. on race day. T-shirts will be provided to the first 200 entrants. Checks (made out to EIU Homecoming Race) and registration information (including name, sex, age [as of October 7], T-shirt size [M, L, XL], mailing address and phone number) should be sent to: EIU, Attn. Homecoming Race, Student Recreation Center, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, Ill. 61920. For information, contact John Henry Pommier at (217) 581-6597.

The race will be followed by the EIU Homecoming parade, set to begin at 9:30 a.m.

Following the parade but before the game, the public is invited to Tent City, located south of O'Brien Stadium. Faculty and staff from all of Eastern's colleges and many departments will be present to greet and chat with EIU students, past and present, as well as members of the community.

At 1:30 p.m., the Eastern Panthers will take on the Tennessee State Tigers at O'Brien Stadium. Admission to the game is \$9, general public; \$5, ages four through high school; and free to EIU students with official ID.

Working in conjunction with EIU's ROTC unit, two parachutists from Archway Skydiving of Vandalia will deliver this year's game ball, as well as an American flag and the Panther Battalion's colors, at the start of play.

The newly added fireworks display will take place as part of the Friday (Oct. 6) evening Homecoming pep rally to be held at O'Brien Stadium. The day of the pep rally – traditionally held the Thursday evening prior to the Homecoming football game – has been moved to Friday

this year in hopes of generating and maintaining team spirit for Saturday' game.

The pep rally, scheduled to take place from 8 to 10 p.m., will feature performances by Eastern's cheerleaders and Pink Panthers; an introduction of Homecoming 2000's king, queen, prince and princess; an introduction of this year's football team; and a short talk by EIU football coach Bob Spoo.

Absent, due to safety concerns, will be the annual homecoming bonfire. Organizers hope the fireworks display, which will end the evening's events, will be a welcome substitute.

In case of rain, the pep rally will take place in the Lantz Fieldhouse and the fireworks display will be cancelled.